



Highlighting STEM opportunities for girls

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Encouraging young women to pursue careers in math and science while building connections to role models was the focus of Expanding Your Horizons, a conference organized by Los Alamos Women in Science and held at Santa Fe Community Convention Center on Feb 14.

More than 200 fifth- through eighth-grade girls attended the event, which included hands-on workshops and a STEM-related careers fair.

“Changing attitudes about taking STEM classes, and encouraging youth to explore STEM in their future is what this conference is all about,” says Laboratory scientist Janette Frigo, who was co-chair of the event. “We want to empower youth to feel unafraid and follow their interests. It is a very important goal as STEM fields need diversity to be able to create the best possible products for the future!”

Many of the student workshops were led by Laboratory volunteers, including biologist Audrey Sanchez, who discussed how to identify and determine the age of birds the Laboratory monitors every year.

“Education and outreach are the best parts of my job,” Sanchez said. “Inspiring the younger generation in science and conservation will ultimately protect our natural world. I know by participating in these events I am making a difference in both my life and the lives of so many others that will be responsible for our future.”

“I learned how to band birds and how to measure them and how they migrate and how the Laboratory catches them,” says Los Alamos elementary school student Jenae, who is an aspiring zoologist. “I want to work with animals.”

Attendees and volunteers at the Expanding Your Horizons event.

Santa Fe Mayor Alan Webber addressed the attendees at lunchtime, and the keynote speech was delivered by designer and educator Leah Buechley, who invented the LilyPad Arduino, a construction kit for sew-able electronics.

“The girls loved the workshops and thought the keynote was amazing!” says Frigo.

“For me, it’s so impressive to see that when the students come in the morning and get into groups they are very quiet and not talking. Then after they attend the workshops and come to lunch and watch the speaker in the afternoon, they are chatting and exchanging and really charged!”

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